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Big Thorn in Korea



In 2003, I went to the Unification Observatory’s Tongil Tower, where one can see the border between South Korea and North Korea in Gangwon-do, the nearest state South Korean to North Korea. The Korean peninsula was divided into two parts, South Korea and North Korea, by this line. This line is the Military Demarcation Line, established by the Armistice at the end of Korean War on July 27 in 1953. This line is called “Hyujeonseon” in South Korea. It is a physical symbol of Koran War. In addition, the length of the Military Demarcation Line is about 250-kilometer, and this line is consists of thick chains like this picture. In order to see the result of Korean War, I went to this place with pious attitude because of my grandfather’s memories. On my way, I saw various wreckages from the Korean War. Some buildings were ruined, and the train was stopped. There were still military equipment like many fragments of tanks and shells near the road. The most interesting scene was the Military Demarcation Line. Unlike my expectation, this place was tranquil and seemed same as other countryside; however, the moment I saw the Military Demarcation Line, my feeling changed. Between this line, South and North Korean soldiers stood up and looked each other with wariness. Furthermore, Near to the Military Demarcation Line, there are many warning sign posts of for land mines. Why were there land mines there I describe a little more to emphasize idea of it being “tense” there. As a result of these two scenes, a tense atmosphere could be felt in this place. While I saw the Military Demarcation Line, I had two feelings. First of all, although South Korean and North Korean soldiers are of the same ethnic; North Korean soldiers killed South Koreans using axe in this place in 1976. Due to one of trees which was in between the line, Korean soldiers attacked South Korean and U.S soldiers. I was really sad that this situation is a fact of life in my country.

Another thought was that ironically this place was very beautiful. After making this line, this place was ruined, but 60 years later this place has picturesque scenery because of the fact that no South Koreans live in this area except for soldiers.. Hence, the uncontaminated environment and various kinds of wild animals existed. I stayed here for 30 minutes, but soon due to the limited time I had to get out this beautiful and horrible place, even though this place is my country.

Although North Koreans and South Koreans are the same race because of two different ideologies, democracy in South Korea and communism in North Korea, they experienced the tragedy of fratricidal war. The existence of this line means that the war is not finished. In other words, in the near future, South and North Korea may face war like Korean War again. While here is no sound of gun fire, after 60 years South Koreans still feel painful because of the Military Demarcation Line.